

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CE, CB

SUBJ: GRUNK FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO SRI LANKA

REF: A) COLOMBO 1081; B) COLOMBO 0937

1. SUMMARY: SARIN CHHAK, "FOREIGN MINISTER" OF SIHANOUK'S "ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION" (GRUNK), APPARENTLY DEPARTED SRI LANKA EARLIER THIS WEEK AFTER WEEK-LONG VISIT. ACTIVITIES HERE INCLUDED TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER AND HIGH GSL OFFICIALS, SPEECH AT LARGE PUBLIC MEETING HONORING PRIME MINISTER'S SON ANURA BANDARANAIKE, AND MEETINGS WITH BUDDHIST LUMINARIES. CHHAK WAS ASSURED OF GSL READINESS TO EXTEND DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO GRUNK, BUT NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING (REF A). APART FROM PUBLICIZING USUAL GRUNK OBJECTIVES, CHHAK'S VISIT SEEMED MOST IMPORTANT AS FURTHER BOOST TO ANURA'S IDENTIFICATION WITH GSL FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES. END SUMMARY.

2. WEEK-LONG VISIT BEGINNING APRIL 1 BY GRUNK FOREIGN MINISTER SARIN CHHAK CONCLUDED ON QUIET NOTE EARLY THIS WEEK AS CHHAK SLIPPED OUT OF SIGHT AND APPARENTLY OUT OF SRI

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LANKA. (MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MDFA) IS

IN FACT UNABLE TO CONFIRM CHHAK'S DEPARTURE). VISIT'S FIRST FIVE DAYS WERE WELL PUBLICIZED. CALL ON PRIME MINISTER APRIL 4 PRODUCED GSL COMMITMENT TO EXTEND DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF KHMER ROUGE, ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS YET BEEN MADE. IN TALKS WITH OTHER GSL OFFICIALS AND IN PUBLIC APPEARANCES CHHAK DECLARED GRUNK INTENDS TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY. HE ALSO EXPRESSED GRUNK'S HOPE FOR SATISFACTORY RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES.

3. AT APRIL 3 MEETING HELD TO CONGRATULATE ANURA BANDARAINKE ON SUCCESSFUL TRIP TO NORTH KOREA AND PRC (REF B), CHHAK SHARED PODIUM WITH NORTH KOREAN VICE PREMIER AS WELL AS WITH SEVERAL MDFA OFFICIALS. CHHAK USED OCCASION TO REFER TO COMMON CULTURE OF CAMBODIA AND SRI LANKA AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR SRI LANKA'S SUPPORT IN GRUNK'S BATTLE AGAINST "U.S. IMPERIALISM." WELL-PUBLICIZED AUDIENCES WITH SEVERAL IMPORTANT BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS AND LAY LEADERS COMPRISED MUCH OF REST OF CHHAK'S VISIT. MEETINGS PRODUCED EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR GRUNK'S "STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION" AND FOR TWO COUNTRIES' COMMON TIES.

4. COMMENT: ANURA BANDARANAIKE PLAYED PROMINENT PART IN CHHAK VISIT, INCLUDING DECLARATION ON HIS PART THAT HE HAD BEEN URGING GRUNK RECOGNITION FOR YEARS. CHHAK'S REFERENCES TO NON-ALIGNMENT ARE CERTAIN TO PLEASE ARCHITECTS OF GSL FOREIGN POLICY, AND TIMING OF VISIT CLOSE ON HEELS OF ANURA INTERVIEW WITH SIHANOUK IN PEKING HAS GIVEN GRUNK THREE WEEKS' SUSTAINED PUBLICITY IN SRI LANKA PRESS AND RADIO. ONE RESULT HAS BEEN FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF ANURA'S ROLE IN CONDUCT OF SRI LANKA'S FOREIGN POLICY.

VAN HOLLEN

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